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ABSTRACT

In 1990, a study was conducted of 1,912 students receiving associate in arts or associate in science degrees the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) in spring 1989 to determine the length of time taken to graduate. Data for the study were gathered from spring 1989 graduates' district transcript records which contained enrollment dates and demographic information including gender, age, and ethnicity. Major findings of the study included the following: (1) the average time from first enrollment in LACCD to graduation was 4.25 years, with students taking anywhere from one semester to more than 16 years to receive their degrees; (2) females took slightly longer to graduate than males; (3) students entering before age 20 and those entering after age 35 finished most rapidly (4 and 3.5 years respectively); (4) differences in graduation rates were found among ethnic groups, with Asian students graduating fastest in an average of 3.5 years; (5) fewer than half of the graduates were stopouts en route to earning a degree; (6) older students earned fewer units than younger students, while Whites and Blacks earned fewer total units than Hispanics and Asians; and (7) 25% of the students who entered between the ages of 25 and 34 stopped out eight or more times. Detailed graphs broken down by gender, age, and ethnicity provide specific data on years to graduation; semesters attended; number of stopouts to graduation; semester course load; total units earned; and total prerequisites and developmental units earned by graduates. (JMC)

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Office of Research, Planning and Analysis

Report No. SEC - 003 - PD

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THE MYTH OF THE TWO YEAR COLLEGE

Length and Variation in the Time Students Take to Complete Associate Degree Requirements

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September 1990

Educational Services Division

Los Angeles Community College District

THE MYTH OF THE TWO YEAR COLLEGE:

Length and Variation in the Time Los Angeles Community College Students Take to Complete Associate Degree Requirements

Summary of Findings

The transcript records of 1,912 Spring 1989 associate degree recipients were analyzed to determine how long students in the Los Angeles Community College District take to graduate. The median time from first enrollment at a district college to graduation was 4.25 years.

Students received degrees after anywhere from one semester to more than 16 years. A total of 193 finished in two years or less, but of these 103 transferred credits from non-district community colleges. Sixty took at least 15.5 years.

There was little variation in the time to graduation for male and female students. Females took slightly longer to graduate.

The median time to graduation for different age groups, determined on the basis of age at first enrollment, did show differences of up to three years. Students entering before 20 and those entering after 35 years of age finished most rapidly with median times of 4.0 and 3.5 years respectively. Students entering between the ages of 20 and 24 took a median 5.3 years. The slowest age group, those entering between 25 and 34 years, took a median 6.5 years.

Time to completion also differed greatly for the different ethnic groups. Asians complete most rapidly, with a median 3.5 years. Blacks persisted the longest, taking a median 6.5 years. Hispanics and whites occupied the mid-range with medians of 4.5 and 4.0 years, respectively.

Although times to completion varied greatly among different sub-groups, the median and mean units completed both for the group as a whole and the sub-groups considered separately were extremely similar. The whole group median was 9.7 units. Asians, with the heaviest average course load, averaged 11.2 units, while blacks, with the lightest load, had a median 9.2 units. Differences between the age groups were also minimal. This finding is highly significant and points to the fact that most community college students attend part-time. Only five percent of the graduating class earned fifteen units or more during each semester

of their enrollment. This is a major factor accounting for the length of time to graduation.

Fewer than half of the graduates, 859, "stopped out" on their way to a degree, and stopping out does not explain the length of time to graduation for most students. However, stopping out does account for the greater time of two sub-groups who took the longest to receive their degrees. Twenty-five percent of the students who entered between the ages of 25 and 34 years stopped out eight or more times. The same percentage of blacks stopped out ten or more times. These measures are four to six semesters greater than those of the group as a whole.

The number of total earned units accounts for the remaining variation between the different sub-groups. Older students earned fewer total units than younger ones; whites and blacks earned fewer total units than Hispanics and Asians.

These results are somewhat different from those of a similar study conducted by the City Colleges of Chicago, which found their students taking even more time to complete their degree requirements than students enrolled in Los Angeles Colleges. But this study nevertheless confirms the key finding of the Chicago study: community colleges are not the two-year institutions many people still consider them to be.

Introduction

The decision to undertake this study was made after reviewing the City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) document, How Long Does it Take to Get a Community College Degree? (1990). That study described the results of a transcript analysis of Spring 1987 graduates at all CCC colleges. It reported that the mean time to graduation was 5.8 years, and that this was primarily because of high part-time attendance, stopping out and taking more than the sixty units required to complete an associate degree.

The Los Angeles Community College District's Office of Research, Planning and Analysis had been working on the transcript analyses of vocational education students, and staff were well aware that the typical community college student career was much longer than two years. Research Analyst Paul Dillon, author of this paper, had developed technology for rapidly producing and analyzing student transcripts. The relevance of the topic has increased with the new Federal Track Record Disclosure requirements, so that Dr. Dillon was asked to replicate and expand upon the Chicago study, using a transcript analysis of Los Angeles Community College associate degree recipients.

This report is a preliminary analysis of the research prompted by the Chicago paper. It has one overriding purpose: to add to the growing body of information explicitly demonstrating that community colleges are not "two year colleges". Although this is well known to the instructors and administrators who work in the community college system, the notion that Associate degree programs should normally be completed in two years persists among people with little contact with these institutions. This false conception is particularly pernicious for the colleges and their students insofar as many federal and state lawmakers continue to believe it.

An even greater contradiction of the popular image is the fact that the people who use community colleges are not primarily interested in obtaining degrees. The traditional collegiate terminology of freshman and sophomore is particularly anachronistic. In the Los Angeles Community College District, less than five percent of the entire student body graduate in any given year. Many students have enough units but are simply not interested in the degree.

But if any group of community college students should be evaluated in relation to the prevailing concept of the two-year college student, it would be those who actually do graduate. Our focus in this report will be on such students; specifically, the 1,912 recipients of Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees in Spring 1989.

METHODOLOGY

The basic data for this study consists of the Spring 1989 graduates' district transcript records. A list of graduate identification numbers was created and used to access student enrollment records maintained on the District's computer. These records extend back to Spring 1974. The process was undertaken using MAGNA8, a fourth generation language that provides virtually unrestricted access to the fields contained in the data base.

The assembled transcript records were downloaded for analysis with SAS-PC. For every graduate the SAS data base contains one record for each course enrollment. The record contains basic student characteristics: birth date, sex, ethnicity, and basic course data: year, semester, subject codes and numbers, a day/evening flag, and the student's course grade. This detailed transcript record includes only the records of Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) units earned after 1974. No records of courses taken or units earned in non-LACCD colleges are included. Since graduation checks are undertaken by each individual college, the credit toward graduation of courses earned elsewhere is not entered into the district data base. In fact, 977 of the graduates reported

prior attendance at some post-secondary institution upon admission to one of the LACCD colleges. As a result, the analyses of years to completion, semesters of enrollment and units completed are certainly underestimates. Given the objective of the study, however, underestimates will not damage the general conclusions.

The statistical analyses will focus on the median values not the means. The former is a numeric average which is strongly affected by extreme values. Very high values for one sub-group will skew the average for the entire group. The median on the other hand, is the value that divides the group in half. It is not influenced by extreme values, and for studies such as the present it is a more useful indicator.

Variation from the median will be looked at through an examination of the upper and lower quartiles. Quartiles divide the whole group into four sub-groups composed of the same number of persons. The quartile values for a given variable are the values that allow such a division. Examination of the quartiles is extremely useful for detecting those cases in which a small number of persons is highly different from the majority.

The Los Angeles Community College District

The Los Angeles Community College District, with nine district colleges, is the largest community college district in the world. The District's students epitomize Cohen and Brawer's description of community college students in general: "--number and variety" (Arthur M. Cohen and Florence B. Brawer, The American Community College, 2d. ed., Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1989. p.30.).

During the past two decades unduplicated enrollment has fluctuated from a high of 137,000 in 1981 to a low of 89,000 in 1985. It has currently grown back at a moderate rate and has been stable at around 100,000 students for the past few years.

Between 1972 and 1988, enrollment by age group varied notably. In 1972, 29.6 percent of the students were under the age of 20; only 15.8 percent were over the age of 35. In 1988 the relative position of these two groups had shifted. Only 19.5 percent of the students were under the age of 20, whereas 23.3 percent were over 35. In 1972, students under 25 formed a majority, with 59.4 percent of the total; by 1988 they were a minority of 47.8 percent.

The ethnic composition of the District's colleges mirrors the growing ethnic diversity of Los Angeles itself. Language is one measure of this diversity. Only 60

percent of District students speak the English language at home. Spanish is the native language of 24 percent. Chinese, Armenian, Tagalog, and numerous other Asian, South-east Asian, and Middle Eastern languages make up the rest.

Although the standard ethnic categories do not reveal the complexity of the District's ethnic composition, they do evidence the trend toward ever greater diversity. The following analyses group Fillipinos and Pacific Islanders with Asians and Native Americans with Other. In 1972 white students numbered 57,037 and accounted for 56.2 percent of the unduplicated enrollment; by 1988 they had declined to 37,987, or 36.0% of the total. Hispanics now make up the next largest ethnic group, having grown from 16,294, or 16.1 percent of the total in 1972, to 29,768, or 28.5 percent, in 1988. In the same period, black enrollment declined slightly from 20,003, 19.7 percent, to 18,842, or 18.0 percent. The greatest growth is found among Asians, who numbered only 5,591, or 5.5 percent, in 1972. In 1988 they made up 14.3 percent of the total with 15,013 students.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE SPRING 1989 GRADUATING CLASS

The basic statistics on the 1,912 graduates who received Associate in Arts or Associate in Science degrees are as follows:

- **The mean total time from first enrollment in a district college to receipt of a degree was 5.8 years;**
- **The median number of semesters was 8.0 and the graduates averaged 3.3 semesters of "stop outs", but the median number of units was zero.**
- **During this period the graduates earned a mean of 75.8 and a median of 73.0 units. A mean of 5.1 units were in remedial college credit courses.**
- **The mean and median semester loads were an identical 9.7 units. Night classes made up 32.1 percent of the average students total units.**
- **Many graduates are still enrolled in classes after having received their degrees.**

These summary findings will be examined in the following section in relationship to the basic student characteristics of age, gender, and ethnic category. Analyses will be made of the medians and the high and low quartiles of each measure. The variation of the median time to completion of the age and ethnic groups from the whole group median will be accounted for in terms of the variation of the other variables.

Students in the Traditional Mold

Before beginning the systematic analysis of the key variables, it is instructive to look at the figures of the students who did graduate in two years or less. Only 90, 4.7 percent of the whole group, graduated in the "traditional" two year pattern. But in every sense these students were atypical. They were younger than the group average; 79 percent, eight out of ten, entered college before the age of 25. In contrast, 69 percent of the total group entered at the same age. The group entering before the age of 20 accounted for 61 percent of the two year graduates but only 48 percent of the total. Significantly, those entering after the age of 35 accounted for only 3 percent of the two year graduates, but made up 13 percent of the total group.

As could be expected, students graduating in two years made no stopouts and averaged slightly more than 15 units per semester. Most attended summer school. They took 91 percent of their courses during the day, in contrast to the whole group average of 65 percent. Their mean total accumulated units were only 67.7, 8 fewer than the group mean of 75.7. But on the average they took the same number of remedial units as those that took more than two years to graduate.

Total Time to Graduation

The patterns for the group as a whole are strikingly different from those of the two year completers. The mean total time to graduation was 5.8 years, but this is skewed upward by the 25% of the graduates who took eight or more years to finish their programs. The median for the group was 4.25 years. Furthermore, graduates who finished in three years or less made up 25% of the total. See Figure 1 for an illustration of years to completion by gender, age and ethnicity.

Both male and female graduates reflected the common pattern although females took slightly longer to finish. The mean time for females was 6.0 years and the median 4.5, whereas for males the mean and medians were 5.4 and 4.0 respectively. The distributions for both sexes were very similar: 25% of both took three years or less to graduate while the upper quartile of females took eight or more years and the corresponding value for males was seven or more years.

The variance of time to graduation is significantly greater when examined from the perspective of age at first enrollment. Surprisingly, the graduates who began after the age of thirty-five took the shortest amount of time to complete their degree, a mean of 5.0 years with a median of 3.5. Students who entered before turning 20 were the next quickest completers with a mean of 5.2 years and a median of 4.0.

The 20-24 year old group had a lower median, 3.5 years, than the younger students but a slightly higher mean, 5.3 years. The 25-34 age group took much longer to finish on the average with a mean of 6.5 years to completion and a median of 5.5 years, a full two years more time than their older and younger counterparts!

The lower and higher quartiles, that is the 25 percent who finished most rapidly and the 25 percent who finished most slowly, of all age groups were very similar. Twenty-five percent of all groups finished in fewer than 2.5 years, except for the youngest which finished 3.0 years or fewer. To a great extent the upper quartiles explain the variation between the groups. The upper 25 percent of the below 20, 20-24 and above 35 age groups graduated in 7.0, 7.5 and 6.0 years or more, respectively. The upper quartile of the 25-34 age group took 9.5 years or more. As we will see shortly, the greater length of time taken by this age grouup can be accounted for in terms of very different enrollment patterns.

The range of values for total time to graduation by ethnic categories, like that of the age groups, was greater than 2.0 years. Asians took the shortest time to finish their programs: a mean of 4.3 and a median of 3.5 years. Blacks took the longest: a mean of 7.1 and a median of 6.0 years. Hispanics and whites occupied the middle of the range with an identical mean of 5.7 years and medians of 4.5 and 4.0 respectively.

As is the case with the age groups, the distributions of values for ethnic groups were quite similar for those who finished most rapidly; 25% of the students in all ethnic categories completed their programs in three years or less. On the other hand, the variation between their upper quartiles was significant. Only 25% of the asian graduates took more than 5.0 years to finish and only 5% took more than 10.0 years. At the other extreme, 25% of the black graduates took 10.5 or more years and 10% took more than 14. As with the median and mean measures, Hispanics and whites occupied the middle ground: 25% of the Hispanics took more than 8.0 years and the same percentage of whites spent more than 7.5 years in school before completing their degrees.

This analysis of time to graduation reveals some differences from the perspective of sex, age and ethnic category. Most of the differences between the different groups are minor. Only the 25-34 year old age group and the black ethnic group stand out strongly from the median values. Is this due to variations in total semesters, number of stop outs, average units or total units earned? We will try to answer this question in the following sections.

Total Semesters of Enrollment

During the years the Spring 1989 graduates pursued their associate degrees they attended an average of 8.8 semesters. The median was 8. The closeness of the mean and median indicates that there were no major sub-groups with extremely high or low values. The total possible number of semesters which could have been completed in the 5.8 years mean time to completion would be 13; in the median of 4.25 years, 10.5 semesters would be completed. Excluding summer school, which would account for 2.0 semesters in 4.0 years, we see that the median attendance of 8.0 is only slightly less than the possible total. Hence the majority of the students appear to have been enrolled continuously during the time they pursued their degrees. Figure 2 graphs variation in semesters to graduation.

We also find that the number of semesters attended is somewhat similar when considered for the different categories of sub-groups. Enrollment patterns by gender are quite similar. The mean number of semesters for males and females was 8.6 and 8.9 years and the medians were 7.5 and 8.0 respectively. The distributions were also similar: 25 percent of both sexes finished in six or fewer semesters. At the other end, 25 percent of the males needed more than 10.5 semesters, while the same proportion of females required 11 or more..

In contrast to the total time to graduation, the semesters of attendance figure was particularly stable across age groups. There was less than one semester difference between the means of the lowest group, graduates who entered after age 35, and the highest, who entered between the ages of 25-34. Twenty-five percent of all age groups finished in seven semesters or fewer, at the low end. Three of the age groups had fairly similar patterns for those students who took longest to complete: The upper quartile of the below 20, 20-24, and 35 and above age groups finished in 10.5, 10.0 and 9.5 semesters or more, respectively. The age group that took the most years to finish, the 25-34 year, also tended to spend more semesters. Twenty-five percent took 12 or more semesters before receiving degrees. Nevertheless, this difference is not sufficient to account for the total additional time they spent completing degree requirements.

The same pattern of similarity across sub-groups presents itself when the semesters of attendance are analyzed from the perspective of ethnicity. Asians spent the fewest on the average, with a mean of 7.9 and a median of 7.5. But these figures were only slightly lower than those of blacks, who spent the most semesters with a mean of 9.3 and a median of 8.5. Whites and Hispanics occupied the middle of the range with means of 8.5 and 9.2 and medians of 7.5 and 8.5.

Twenty-five percent of all races finished in six semesters or fewer, but at the other end there were greater differences. Twenty-five percent of the Asians took more than 9.5 semesters, while the upper twenty-five percent of all other groups enrolled for more than 11 semesters. Again, note that total semesters of attendance does not account for the significant variations in total time, although it contributes to understanding why Asian students finish faster.

The Semesters of Attendance/Total Time Ratio

For all but a small percentage of the graduating students, the total completion time was extended by three factors: coursework in excess of the required 60 units, part-time attendance and stopping out. A quick overview of the relative importance of the latter can be gained by examining the ratios between number of semesters and total time.

The ratio of the median measures of semesters enrolled to completion time is 1.88 for the group as a whole. In other words, most graduates were enrolled two semesters every year from their first registration to the time of receiving their degree. Looking at the group from the perspective of the different characteristics we find that only the 25-34 age group and the black racial category had an average enrollment of fewer than 1.5 semesters per year.

The ratio of the means for the entire graduating class is lower overall, reflecting the skewing effect of the students who spent six, ten, fifteen or more years between their first enrollment and the receipt of their associate degrees.

This indication of continuous registration suggests that part-time attendance is a more important factor in explaining the extended total time to graduation in the Los Angeles Community College District than stopping out.

Stopping Out

Only 859 of the 1,912 graduates stopped out. As a result, the mean number of stop outs was 3.3 but the median was 0. This is also generally true of the group when examined from all of the traditional student characteristics. Only blacks and the 25-34 age group had a median number of stop outs greater than 0. A fact that explains, in great part, their longer time to graduation. Figure 3 illustrates these patterns.

The high means for the different sub-groups and the group as a whole is accounted for by the high frequency of stopouts in a small percentage of students. Twenty-five percent of all graduates took four or more semesters off; ten percent took 13 or more; five percent took 16 or more.

Females who stopped out did so more often than their male counterparts. Twenty-five percent took five or more semesters off in contrast to three; ten percent took 14 or more in contrast to the ten or more taken by the same percentage of male students.

Twenty-five percent of the graduates who entered between the ages of 25 and 34 stopped out eight or more times in marked contrast to the other the upper quartile of the other age groups for which the value was three. Ten percent of all age groups had more than ten stop outs.

The stop out behavior of the main ethnic categories parallels the measures examined above. Asians stopped out very little. Seventy-five percent never did and only five percent stopped out more than eight times. Blacks, on the other hand, stopped out frequently: 25 percent took off 10 or more semesters between first enrollment and graduation; ten percent interrupted their pursuit of the associate degree 16 or more times. Fewer than half of Hispanics and whites stopped out, and they did so less frequently. The upper quartile of both groups was marked by four or more semesters absence.

Average Semester Load

The 1989 graduating class completed their degree requirements at a relaxed pace. The mean and median units earned per semester were 9.7. Only five percent took 15 or more units per semester. Since the spring graduates represented approximately two percent of the total enrollment in 1989, the traditional sophomores were only 0.10 percent of those attending college. Clearly the community college students are not what many still consider them to be. Figure 4 graphs the pattern of load by student characteristics.

The closeness of mean and median measures of average semester load is striking and shows itself for all of the subgroups. On the average females earned fewer units per semester than males; the means and medians being 9.4 and 10.2 respectively. Ten percent of both groups averaged fewer than five units each semester. There was little difference between the average loads of the different age groups. Students who entered before the age of 20 had an identical mean and median measure of 10.4 units per semester. The 25-34 age group took only slightly fewer units on the average. Their mean and median were 8.8 and 8.6

respectively. The differences between the means and medians of the other two groups were also minimal. The value of these measures fell between 9.4 and 10.4.

The four ethnic categories differed less than three units on their average semester course load. Asians took a mean and median of 11.1 and 11.2 units per semester at the high end while the corresponding measures for blacks, the group with the lightest load, were 9.2 and 9.1. Hispanics and whites likewise earned fewer units per semester of attendance averaging 9.8 and 9.3 respectively. In spite of the slight differences between these groups it is notable that ten percent of the asian graduates averaged more than 15 units per semester.

Total Units Completed

At these course taking levels one can see that, in most cases, three years would be required to complete a degree, although the mean times would be pushed up by the students who do stop out frequently. The actual median of four years is the result of courses that the graduates took in excess of the associate degree requirements.

The mean number of units earned by all graduates was 75.7, the median 73. Twenty-five percent earned more than 87 and ten percent earned more than 103 units. Clearly, this high level of courses completed, together with the part-time attendance, accounts for the extended time to graduation.

There is little difference in the units accumulated by male and female graduates. In both cases the means, 77.3 and 74 respectively, were higher than the medians of 75 and 72, indicating that a small group of students took a significantly higher number of courses.

A clear trend is evident when the total units of the different age groups is examined: younger students accumulate more units. Graduates who started at one of the District's colleges before turning 20 had a median of 74 units at graduation; those who entered after 34 had 64. The 20-24 and 25-34 age groups had 67 and 64 respectively. This trend is most probably explained in terms of the relative maturity of the different age groups and the tendency for the older students to have clearer educational goals. As the next section will show, it is not readily explainable in terms of remedial course work.

Whites and blacks accumulated fewer units than Hispanics and Asians. The latter groups had identical means and medians: 80.8 and 78. Blacks earned a mean 75.5 units with a slightly lower median of 72. Whites graduated with the fewest: a mean 69.8 and a median 68 units. This pattern is clearly to be explained in terms

of the greater number of remedial courses, specifically in English as a second language, taken by non-English speaking Hispanics and Asians.

Remedial Coursework

Most graduates,1311 of the 1912, took at least one remedial course. Here again the mean, 5.1 units, is higher than the median, 3.0, indicating that many of the graduates took more than two remedial courses. In fact, 25 percent of the group accumulated more than eight units in remedial courses, ten percent more than 12.

Males and females were nearly identical, with a equal median of three units but a slightly higher mean for males: 5.4 as compared to 4.9 for females. There was a direct inverse relation between the age groups and the number of remedial units earned. The median for all students younger than 35 was 3.0, while the median for students over that age was 0. The means for age groups, beginning with the youngest, were 5.1, 4.2, 4.4, and 3.8 respectively. Ten percent of all groups earned more than 11 units of remedial units, primarily in English.

The mean and median number of remedial units for Hispanic graduates was the highest at 7.0 and 6. Asians and blacks showed similar values for these measures. The median for the first group was 3.0 and the mean 6.1. Blacks likewise accumulated a median of 3.0 and a mean of 5.8. Whites had the lowest values for this measure. Although the median was 3.0, the mean was only 3.1, indicating a small percentage who took numerous prerequisite or developmental courses. Twenty-five percent of Asians, blacks and Hispanics took 9 units of more in remedial courses, whereas only ten percent of the whites accumulated this many units in non-degree credit units.

CONCLUSION

There are clearly some normal patterns to be found among students completing an Associate's degree in Los Angeles Community College District colleges. But they are certainly not those of the traditional two year, full time graduate pursuing only those courses leading to a degree. Such students made up only five percent of the Spring 19089 graduating class.

Rather strong central tendencies are found in the average number of semesters of attendance, between seven and nine, and the average number of units earned per semester, approximately nine. Given these relatively strong tendencies, the time to completion is determined by the total number of units earned, the number of stopouts, and the amount of remedial coursework.

When the whole group is examined from the perspective of the basic student characteristics, one encounters some variation. Sex does not seem to be a very important factor although females accounted for nearly twice as many graduates as males. When the graduates were grouped by age at first enrollment some surprising results were obtained. Students enrolling for the first time after the age of 35 finished the most rapidly. Students enrolling for the first time between the ages of 24 and 34 took the most time to finish, nearly three years longer than the oldest students. The younger students, who enter school before the age of 25 finish in approximately the same time, and take more time than the 35-and-above group. These differences are due to number of units taken and the number of stopouts. Younger students and those over thirty five stopout rarely, those between the ages of 25 and 34 often. Younger students take more units than older ones.

Classified by ethnic categories the graduates also revealed important differences. Asians finish most rapidly, blacks take the most time. Whites and hispanics, occupying the mid-range, take approximately the same time. These differences are to explained in terms of remedial coursework and stopouts. Whereas Asian students take approximately the same number of remedial units as Hispanic students, they stop out extremely rarely. Blacks, on the other hand, take as many remedial units as Asian students but their stopout rate is extremely high. White students take fewer total units and fewer remedial units than Hispanic students but tend to stop out more than Asian students.

Clearly there is another level of sociological explanation to account for the variation; e.g., the poverty of the blacks in Los Angeles and the child rearing responsibilities of the 25-34 age group, but the general picture is clear: the two year community college student is not a current reality. It is the image of something developed long ago as an ideal, but that is now only a myth.

Figure 1

Total Years to Graduation

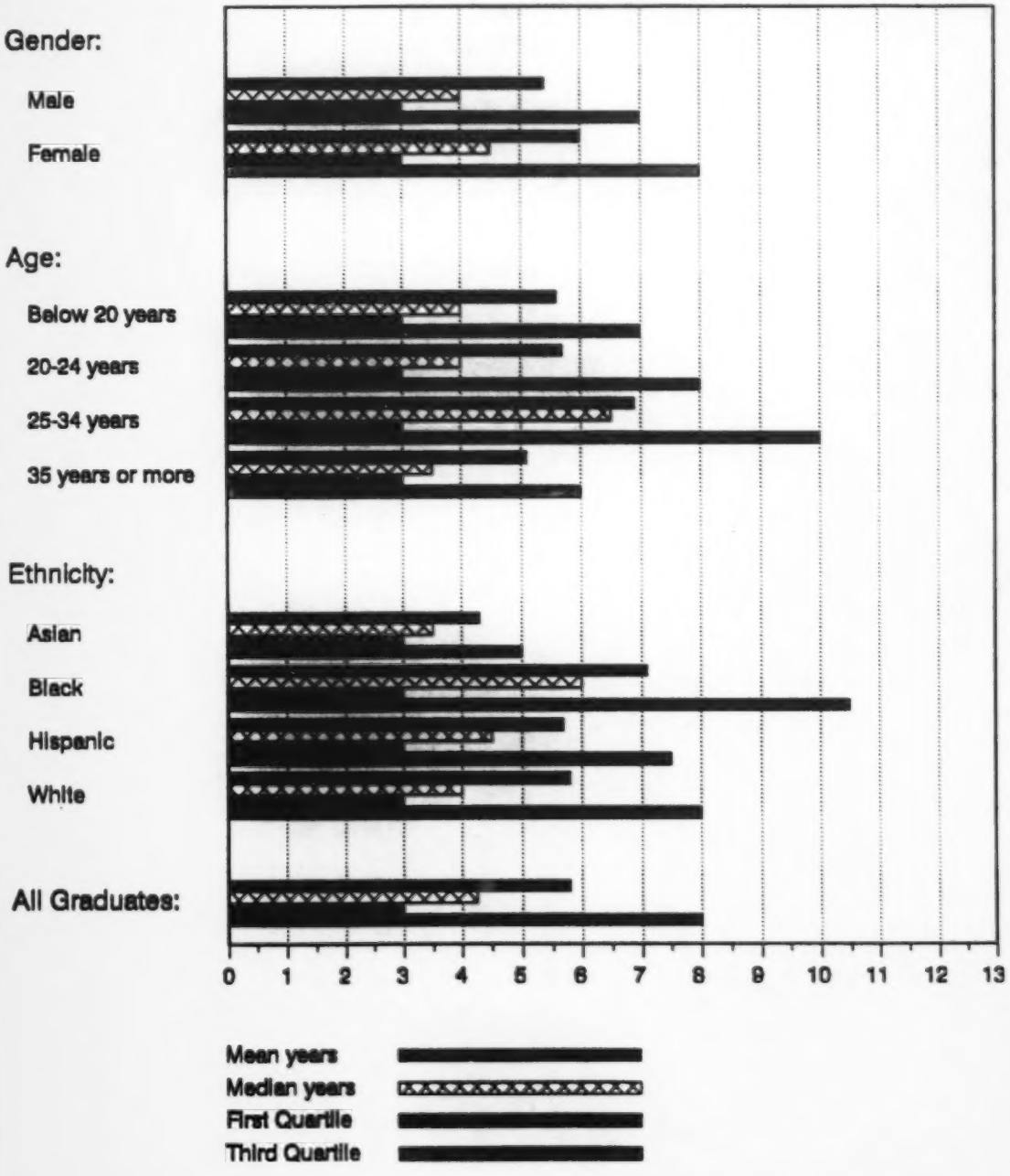


Figure 2

Semesters Attended to Graduation

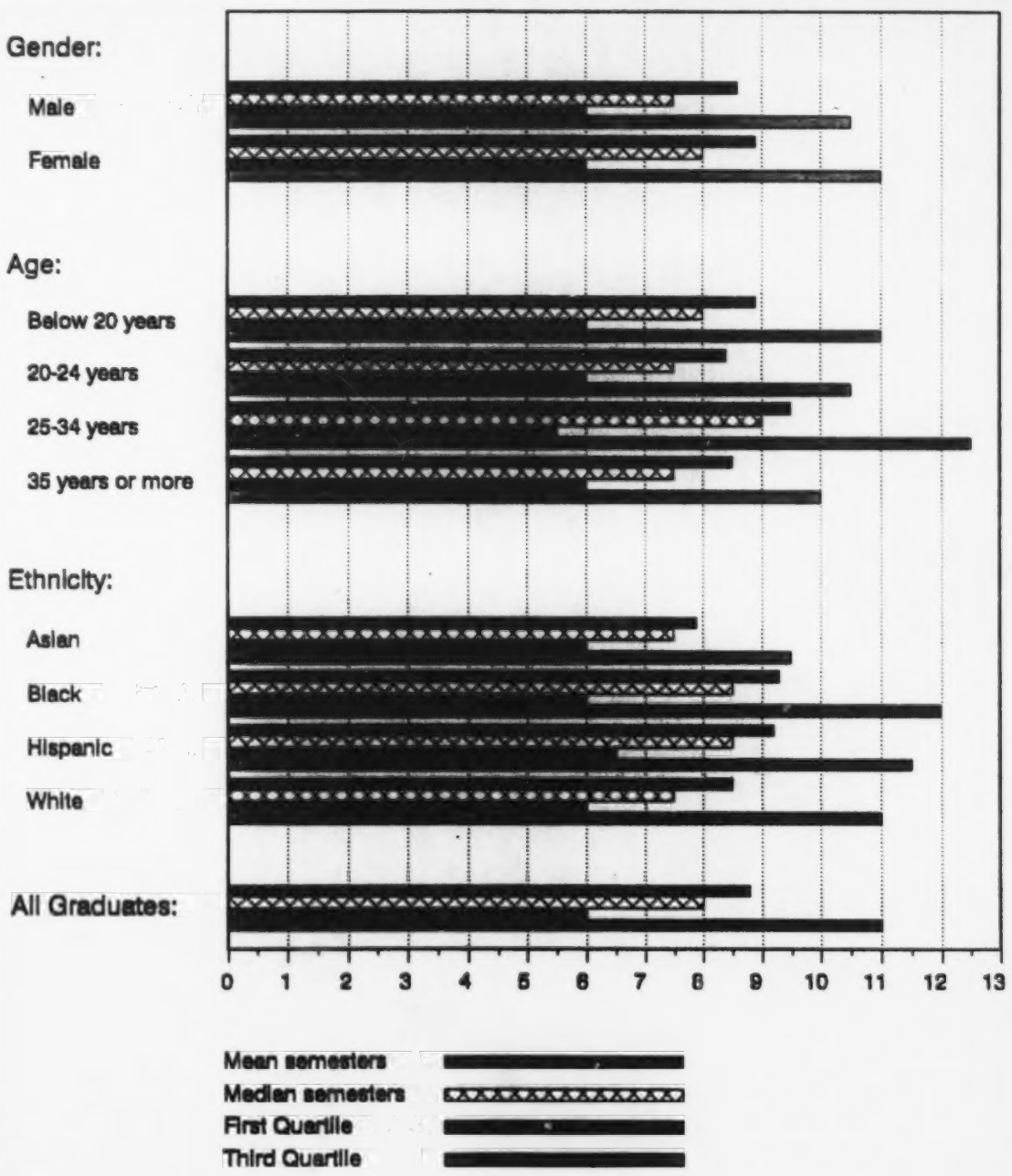


Figure 3

Number of Stop Outs to Graduation

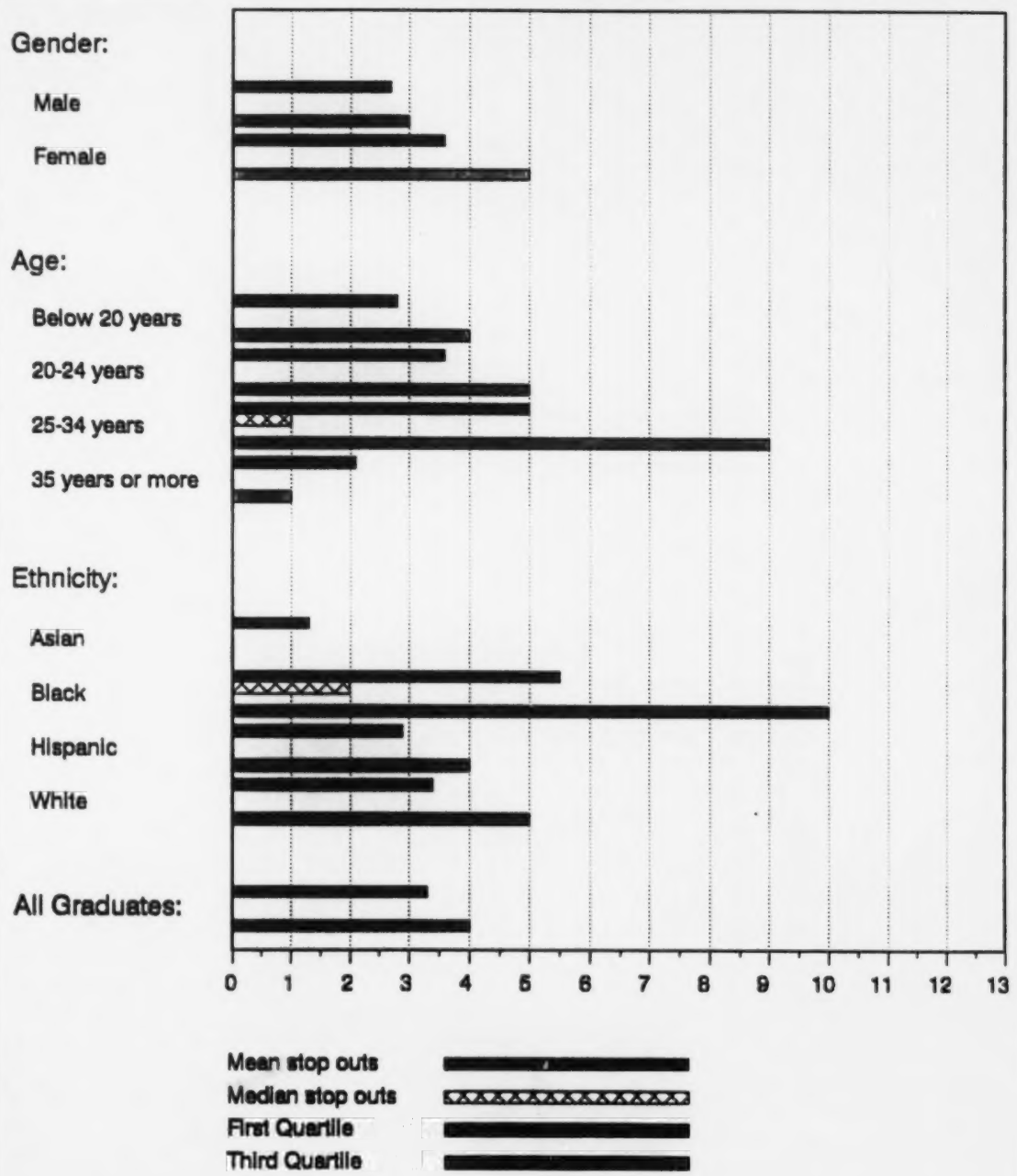


Figure 4

Semester Course Load of Graduates

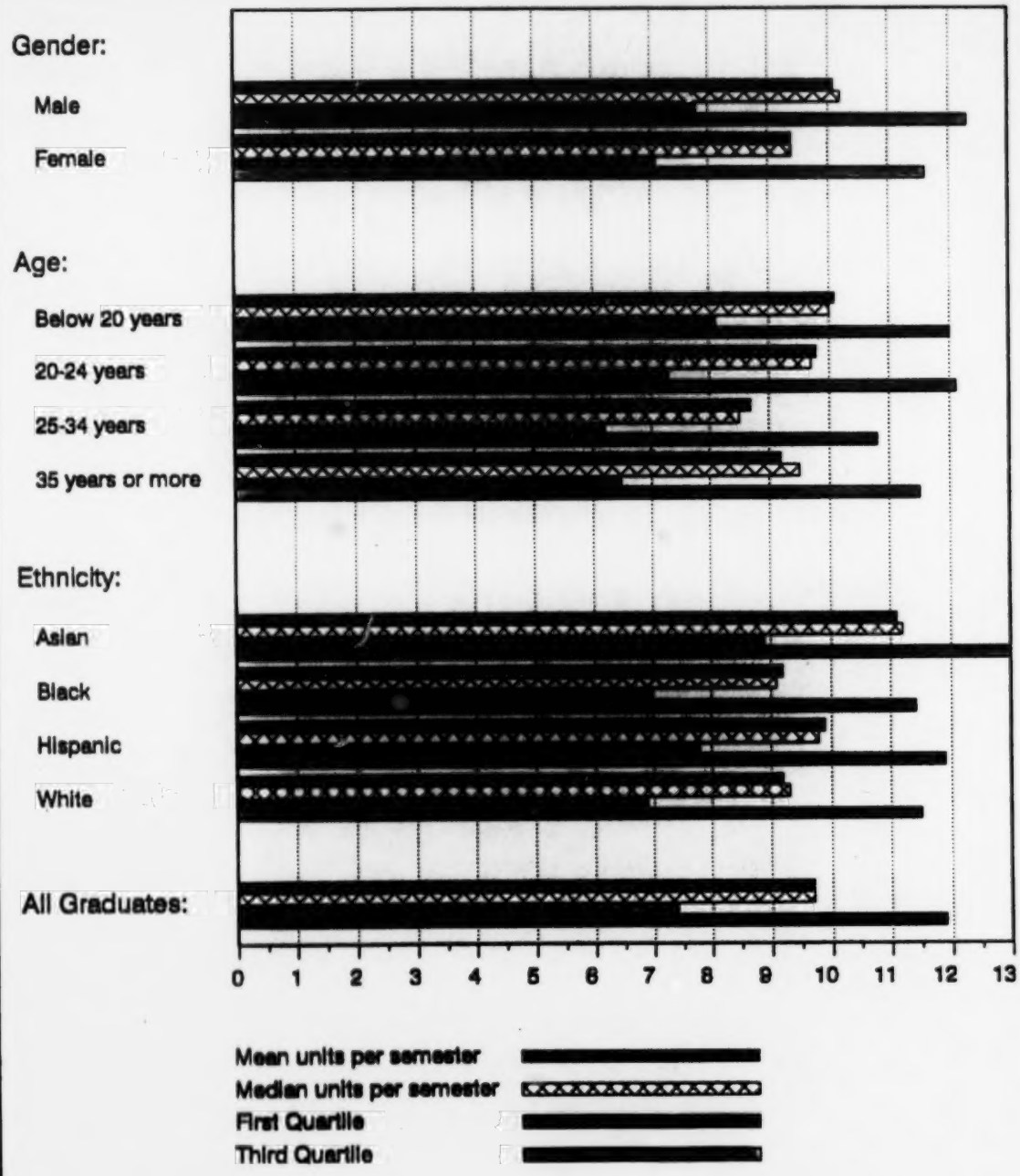


Figure 5

Total Units Earned by Graduates

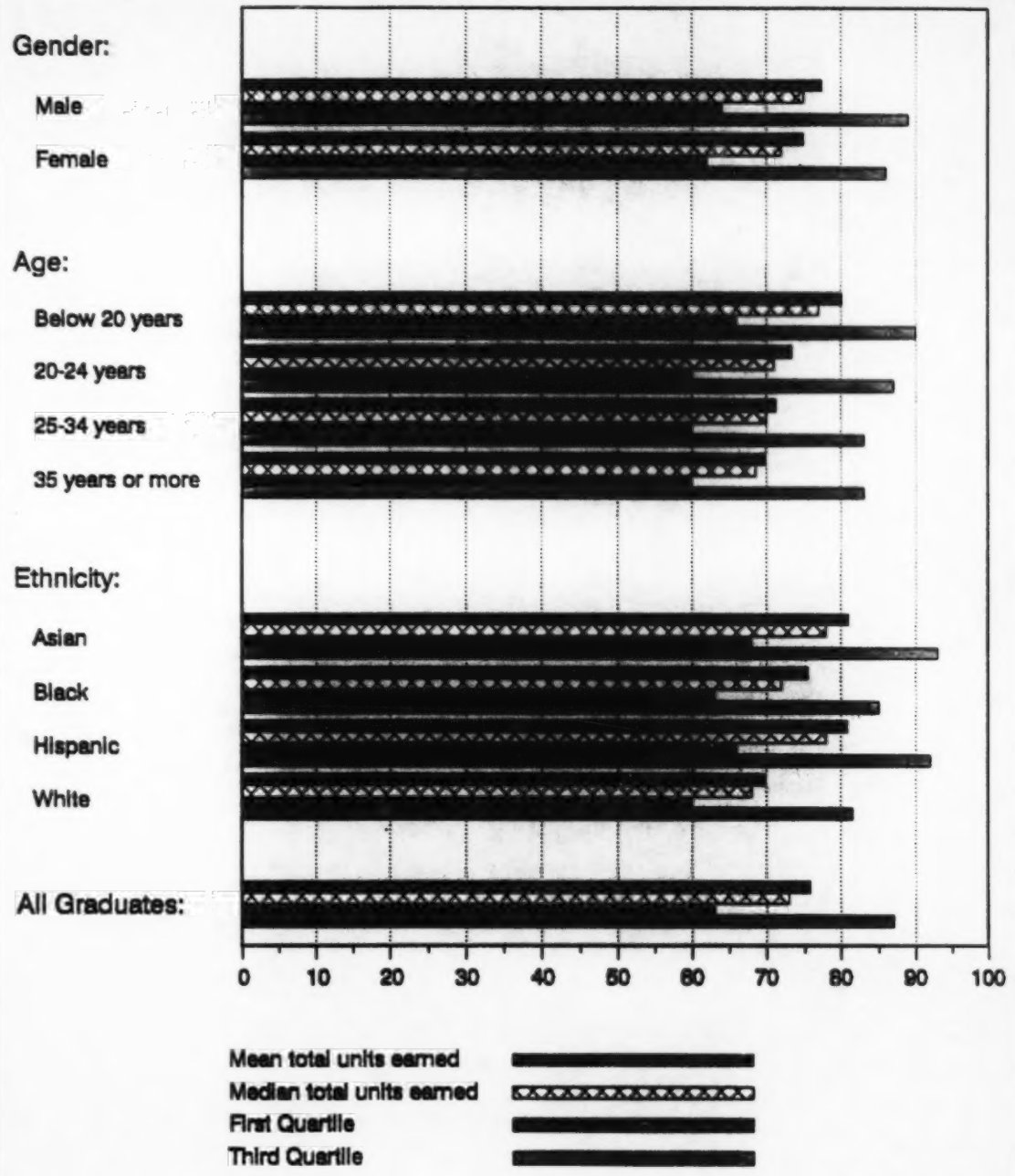
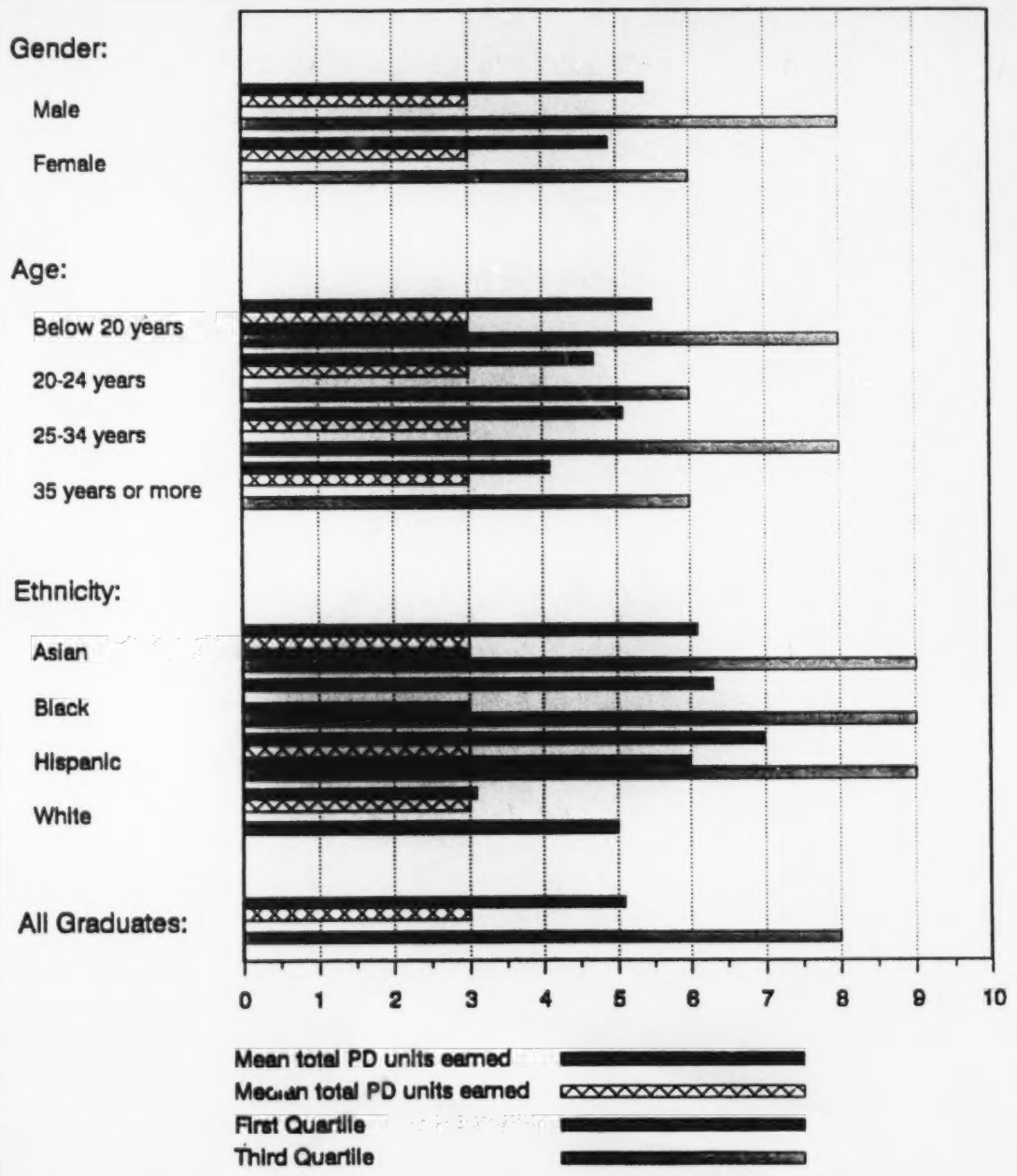


Figure 6

Total Prerequisite and Developmental Units Earned by Graduates*



*Prerequisite/Developmental (PD) courses include non-transferable English 28.

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